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ABSTRACT

The Goal Based Education Program of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory has been engaged since 1981 in profiling secondary schools and/or secondary programs practicing goal based education. Profiles are presented of 17 of these schools representing different geographical areas and diverse student populations. The profiles describe the characteristics of the school and student body and the major elements of the school program. An examination of the profiles reveals several strong themes the schools have in common: (1) caring for students is a major value; (2) academic excellence is a school priority; (3) goals and outcomes drive curriculum planning and instruction; (4) time is used in a flexible way; (5) unity of mission and purpose is built by participatory planning and decision making; and (6) planning is a continuous process. Other commonalities, such as stress on positive discipline, use of educational technology to support continuous progress approaches, and an emphasis on local development of system and curriculum support materials also emerged. (JD)

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GOAL BASED SECONDARY SCHOOLS:

A SUMMARY OF COMMONALITIES

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Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

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November 1985

GOAL BASED SECONDARY SCHOOLS:

A SUMMARY OF COMMONALITIES

The Goal Based Education Program of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory has been engaged since 1981 in profiling secondary schools and/or secondary programs which practice the principles of goal based education. As part of an ongoing series of descriptions of programs and products, 17 such profiles have been prepared describing the outstanding features of a significant cross-section of goal based secondary programs in North America. Ten different states are represented, along with one Canadian province. These schools come from every region of the country--Southeast, Northwest, Southwest, Northeast, Far West and Middle West. They serve communities ranging from coalitions of small rural towns to the central city, with economic bases as diverse as booming high tech areas and depressed industrial cities. Their student bodies range in diversity from less than one-half of one percent minority to more than 40 percent minorities and from 80 percent college bound to 20 percent with plans for education beyond high school. Their grade organization varies from 7-12 to 10-12 and their size from under 400 to over 2000 students. More than half of them have received some form of recognition for excellence or have participated in widely known innovative groups, including the U.S. Secondary School Recognition Program, the Danforth/NASSP Model School Program and the Kettering School Climate Program.

The Profiled Schools

The schools represented include:

1. Hood River High School, Hood River, Oregon. (Profile #2) Hood River High School initiated a series of innovative practices when the school opened in the fall of 1970 and has been working since that time to smooth out the

rough spots and make the practices work to the benefit of all, including students, staff and community. The innovations were designed and implemented in order to realize the ideal of individualization--a program to meet the needs and abilities of every student. The overall plan incorporates several important elements including continuous progress instruction, use of the computer to assist teachers and facilitate recordkeeping, a modularized curriculum that opens up new opportunities for students, a teacher advisor program, increased student responsibility for their own learning and a participatory management system.

2. Whitney Community Learning Center, Cerritos, California. (Profile #6) Established in 1976, the Whitney Community Learning Center uses a competency based college preparatory curriculum in all subjects for students in grades 7-12. Located in Cerritos, California in the Los Angeles metropolitan area, the school offers instruction to college-bound students in the ABC Unified School District.

Whitney students are selected through competitive testing. District students are tested in skills areas of reading, writing and mathematics and are ranked according to test scores. Students with the highest scores may apply to and be selected for transfer to Whitney.

Graduation requirements include passage of all required subjects and elective courses. Students are assessed through teacher-developed criterion-referenced tests. They are expected to demonstrate proficiency in all subject areas prior to graduation and must meet levels of competence established by the district in accordance with California law.

Major program elements include:

- A college preparatory competency based curriculum

- Competency tests keyed to course objectives
- A grading system based on quarterly testing of competency achievement
- Disciplinary procedures that include work/student sessions

3. Bishop Carroll High School, Calgary, Alberta, Canada. (Profile #10) In 1971, Bishop Carroll High School in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, opened its doors offering a continuous progress, individualized approach to education for all students in grades 10-12.

The organization of the school included changes in curriculum and staffing structures for the school. The school accepted a new way in which education dollars are spent while maintaining a per student education cost equal to the other four high schools in the Calgary Catholic School District.

The program includes:

- A continuous progress approach to instruction with emphasis on scheduled independent study for all students
- A school building, designed for the new approach to education, which does not include traditional classrooms
- A teacher-advisor program tied directly to individualized independent study
- Teachers working in teams and aided by increased support staff
- A modularized curriculum divided into nine areas of knowledge with graduation requirements in each
- Flexible student scheduling, including opportunities for off-campus learning experiences for credit

4. Chalmette High School, New Orleans, Louisiana. (Profile #14) Chalmette High School has developed and implemented a continuous progress, individualized approach to instruction in all subjects for all students grades 9-12. Part of the St. Bernard Parish School System, Chalmette is a suburban high school located in the New Orleans, Louisiana, metropolitan area. The school adopted continuous progress instruction to counteract high student

dropout rates and low student achievement levels and to improve instruction for all students.

Features of the Chalmette program include:

- Continuous progress instruction allowing students to progress through the curriculum at individual rates and not tied to grade levels
- A special program wherein students are assigned to consult and work with teacher-advisors in developing individualized programs of study
- Subject area learning centers staffed by department teachers in which students independently follow individualized programs of study
- A variety of student groupings for instruction, ranging from large group instruction to totally independent study
- Flexible scheduling with students involved in making decisions about how school time is spent

5. Waldport High School, Waldport, Oregon. (Profile #19) Guided by Instructor Bruce E. Herbert, the Waldport High School Business Department has adopted a flexible scheduling, goal based approach to instruction which has resulted in increased student enrollment and the offering to students of an exceptionally large number of business courses.

Located in an Oregon coastal community of 1200, Waldport High's student enrollment is approximately 275 students in grades 9-12. In the school's Business Department, instructor Herbert teachers 25 separate courses, many more than in any other academic area in the school.

Development of the expanded goal based program began in 1976 and has included the following:

- Herbert's development and implementation of course descriptions for a large number of new courses
- Adoption of flexible scheduling of student time to allow more students to take business courses

- Renovation of the Business Department classroom into an "all-electric" Business Lab used by all students in all Lab courses throughout the school day, according to individual schedules

- Creation of a media center containing reference materials, texts and workbooks used by all students during their scheduled time in the Lab

- Institution of self-directed, individualized instruction based on modularized study guides for each course

6. Lawrence North High School, Indianapolis, Indiana. (Profile #27)

Lawrence North High School in Indiana has successfully undertaken a major school improvement effort concentrated on the institution of participatory management techniques and the involvement of parents in the educational process. Located in one of eight suburban districts in the Indianapolis area, Lawrence North was completed in 1976 and includes 100 certified staff and a student population of 1,400.

School improvement centers around the adoption of a program called "Challenge Education," initially as part of the school's participation in the Eli Lilly Endowment/Charles F. Kettering Foundation jointly-sponsored Secondary School Improvement Project. "Challenge Education" specifies roles for the school, its students, its teachers and the community, fostering the involvement of all participants to promote a sense of ownership in the education and development of the district youth.

"Challenge Education" at Lawrence North is designed to develop self-direction and self-awareness in students, assisting them to prepare for life as independent adults. The development of the program has included:

- A self-study to identify areas needing improvement

- Development of priority outcomes for student learning and selection of specific improvement goals for planned action

- The institution of a teacher/advisor program to assist students in developing confidence, decision-making skills and ownership in the school

- The use of participatory management techniques for making decisions about program direction, policies and activities
- Extensive involvement of parents in school improvement efforts and educational programs

7. Lynbrook High School, San Jose, California. (Profile #28) Efforts to encourage personal excellence among students and extensive teacher training programs have contributed to an improvement in already-high student achievement levels over the past five years at Lynbrook High School. Considered an affluent school with a student body drawn from a community that is above average in income and education, Lynbrook is located in California's Silicon Valley, in San Jose. Part of the Fremont Union High School District, which includes five high schools and one continuation school, Lynbrook has a student population of 1,970 and a full-time teaching staff of 65.

The school campus is large and modern, with excellent facilities for all school progams. Students are primarily drawn from the city's upper middle class community, there is no significant minority population and 80 percent of students attend colleges or universities after graduation from Lynbrook.

Under the leadership of Principal Dave Pitman, Lynbrook programs have, since 1977, focused on increasing student achievement. Activities have included:

- Emphasis on high academic and behavioral expectations for students based on a concept of professionalism to prepare students for life as responsible adult citizens
- Assumption of counseling roles by administrators, who work with all staff to make students feel important, capable and contributing members of the school community
- Establishment and schoolwide enforcement of a code of student conduct defining rules for behavior
- Expansion of teacher training programs focusing on improving teacher classroom skills

- Institution of extensive volunteer programs for district parents to increase participation in education

8. Ribault Senior High School, Jacksonville, Florida. (Profile #31) There have been significant changes in Ribault student achievement levels both on nationally normed standardized achievement tests and on the Florida statewide basic skills test introduced in 1977 in compliance with the state's Educational Accountability Act.

A number of program changes at the school have contributed to gains in student achievement, including:

- The establishment and consistent enforcement of a strong program of discipline, including rules for student conduct, a dress code and strict attendance policies
- Schoolwide promotion of academic excellence, based on high standards and expectations for student achievement
- Assessment of student strengths and weaknesses and refocusing instruction to teach skills needed to increase performance
- Strong commitment from teachers, principals and superintendent to help students achieve

9. Chandler High School. (Profile #35) Institution of goal based educational management, extensive curriculum revision and the adoption of a schoolwide discipline and academic reward system have led to dramatic changes in student achievement levels at Chandler High School since 1976. Located near Phoenix in Chandler, Arizona, the school serves 1,500 students in grades 10 through 12 and is the one high school in the Chandler Unified School District No. 80.

Several elements contributed to the changes at Chandler:

- Creation of a positive school environment with high expectations for teachers, emphasis on high aspirations for students, a firm discipline policy and a system to reward academic achievement

- Districtwide implementation of a management by objectives system including district, school building, department and individual teacher goals

- Annual review of progress toward short- and long-range goals and objectives, including regular evaluations of teachers and administrators

- Extensive curriculum revision, increased graduation requirements and the institution of required minimum competencies

- Involvement of parents and other community members in the evaluation and review of school curriculum standards

10. West Windsor-Plainsboro High School, Princeton Junction, New Jersey. (Profile #36) West Windsor-Plainsboro High School in Princeton Junction, New Jersey, offers a tightly-structured, diversified curriculum in a nontraditional, open setting. Built in 1973, it is the single high school in a rapidly growing district that is changing from a primarily rural to a suburban, research-oriented community. Students in the district progress from the two K-3 primary schools through the 4-6 elementary school and spend six years at West Windsor-Plainsboro High School in grades 7-12.

A number of factors contribute to the school's focus on excellence:

- A diversified, flexible curriculum focused on basic skills instruction in reading, writing, mathematics, science and social studies

- Use of a variety of instructional techniques, tailored to student needs and subject area requirements

- High faculty and administrative concentration on continued curriculum improvement

- Community interest in and support of school programs

- An extensive guidance program for all students

11. Colville High School, Colville, Washington. (Profile #37) Over the past 10 years, Colville High School in Colville, Washington, has implemented a series of school improvements that have resulted in increased student

achievement and improved school climate. Using a goal based management system and a decentralized decision making approach, changes in the school schedule, testing programs, instructional techniques and curriculum have taken place with high community, staff and student support.

Main features of the Colville High School program include:

- o Goal based management approach with high teacher involvement in development, problem solving and decision making
- o Focus on quality instruction with specific high expectations for teachers and strong administrative support
- o A strong emphasis on academic achievement and high standards for student behavior

12. Glendale Union High School District, Phoenix, Arizona. (Profile #38) School improvement at Glendale Union High School District (GUHSD) in Arizona is based on district-developed criterion-referenced testing programs and the use of student test data to target improvement areas.

In 1972, GUHSD began development of a program called the Instructional Mangement System that is focused on student acquisition of basic skills in five priority curriculum areas. In the Glendale district, the term "basic" includes skills expected at the average and above average levels of student achievement, not just "minimals."

The district has developed an extensive program of student testing in the five curriculum areas using tests developed at a relatively high behavior level as identified in Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. Results of this testing are then used by individual schools to create annual improvement plans to improve instruction.

The Glendale program includes:

- The Instructional Mangement System that encompasses curriculum development, testing, test data analysis, program evaluation and improvement planning
- Locally-developed criterion-referenced tests used districtwide to pre- and post-test all students at all grade levels annually in the five areas of Language Arts, Reading, Mathematics, Social Studies and Science
- School-level improvement planning using student test data to pinpoint areas for improvement

13. West Linn High School, West Linn, Oregon. (Profile #39) Historically a school with good student achievement, West Linn has in the past few years undertaken extensive efforts to improve instruction and increase student achievement. There has been significant turnover in school district and high school administration in the past five years, and this change has given impetus to the school's improvement efforts. Principal Dr. Richard Sagor has led the school through the development of the following renewal efforts:

- A program for training teachers new to the school, including a graduate-level credit "New Teacher Seminar" with an emphasis on the application of the results of effective schooling research
- Expansion of the school's staff development programs
- Institution of a cycle of instructional improvement guided by department action
- A shift in roles for governance of the school designed to focus teachers and administrators on instructional improvement

14. Mariner High School, Everett, Washington. (Profile #40) Located north of Seattle, Mariner High School in Everett, Washington, began operation in 1971 as an innovative high school focused on providing individualized instruction for all students in all subjects. Approximately 1,200 students in grades 10-12 from four communities attend Mariner, the single high school in the Mukilteo School District fed by two junior high schools and nine elementary schools.

The Mariner program features:

- An outcome-based curriculum, including written objectives, aligned activities and tests, and featuring both individualized and flexible grouping instruction
- An unusual school-year structure including two 15-week terms and an end-of-year, six-week "mini-term"
- A learning support system providing a wide variety of services to teachers and students

15. Pleasant Hill High School, Eugene, Oregon. (Profile #41) In a community that is very supportive of the school and in which parents are concerned with student excellence, Pleasant Hill High School, despite its small size, has developed several exemplary programs and offers a wide spectrum of educational opportunities for all students, including a challenging four-year Scholars Program, a widely-acclaimed forestry program and a career exploration program required for all students.

Elements of the Pleasant Hill approach include:

- Department goals and planned course statements, featuring annual updating of curriculum based on review of student test data
- A schoolwide effort to upgrade academic challenges to students that has resulted in better performance by students at all levels of achievement
- A student advisory program with teachers and administrators serving as advisor/guides to small groups of students, resulting in significant changes in the overall school climate

16. South High School, Salt Lake City, Utah. (Profile #42) South High School in Salt Lake City, Utah, has taken major steps to alleviate problems common to many large urban high schools in the 1970s. In the past 10 years, a number of efforts have been successful in improving student achievement, reducing discipline problems, improving attendance and creating a positive learning climate for an exceptionally diverse school population.

Improvement efforts at South have included:

- Successful improvement of the school climate to reduce conflicts among diverse student populations, improve student attendance, reduce discipline problems and preserve instructional time

- The institution of a schoolwide ethics program through funding by the Danforth Foundation, resulting in increased learning opportunities for students, democratic governance procedures and supportive student interactions

- Cooperative efforts to expand programs and activities, get community feedback and work with other schools in the district to create a core curriculum for all Salt Lake district high schools

17. Centennial High School, Portland, Oregon. (Profile #43) For the past three years, Centennial High School has focused on using student performance data as the basis for goal setting, planning and change through the establishment of a data-based approach to long-term school improvement.

Now in the second cycle of a research-based school improvement approach, results of Centennial efforts have included:

- The establishment of cooperative decision making involving the full staff in school improvement goal setting, planning and implementation which has led to improved staff morale and increased participation and enthusiasm for schoolwide improvement

- Use of student performance data for establishing goals for improvement and as the barometer for measuring improvement successes

- The institution of a schoolwide attendance/discipline policy

- Improved student performance on nationally-normed standardized achievement tests

- Development of a schoolwide commitment to long-term improvement

Commonalities in the Schools

While relatively diverse, this set of schools, however, really had much in common. When the profiles are read as a whole, several strong themes emerge. These include:

I. Caring for Kids is a Major Value of the School

This theme finds a variety of individual expressions among the 17 schools. The most common was a structured system in which all teachers act as guides and advisors to a small number of students, getting to know them almost as well as their friends and parents. At Hood River High School, for example, each professional staff member has a "guide group" of about 15 students for which they are responsible. Begun as a way to facilitate post high school planning, the guide groups now act to involve students in responsibility for tracking their own progress in a continuous progress system, are a vehicle for widespread intramural competition and function as a mini "social system" in which students share birthdays, plan trips, engage in community support work and generally function in a "family-life" way.

At Bishop Carroll, each teacher serves as a Teacher-Advisor (TA) to 25-30 students and students remain with the same TA throughout their school career. TAs are personally responsible for advice to students in all areas of their education and all members of a single TA group meet together at the beginning and end of each day. TAs also work closely with counselors, and other staff in assisting individual students and maintain close contact with the parents.

Chalmette teacher advisors help students with decisions about how to use time, discovery of individual talents and interests, and recordkeeping. They also act as school liaison to parents. Lawrence and Colville also have formal teacher-advisor systems, while Lynbrook utilizes administrators in a similar way.

Another form which this theme takes among the schools is utilization of resource or learning centers. At Chalmette, for example, there are seven such centers organized around core areas of the curriculum and staffed at all times by a team of subject area teachers. Students have the opportunity to utilize a wide variety of resources and receive the guidance and direction of a variety of professionals as they learn.

Mariner High School maintains a comprehensive learning support center in which instructional support, information management, guidance and counseling and assessment and evaluation services are coordinated for both students and staff.

II. Academic Excellence is a School Priority

It is worth noting that many of these programs began as a major formal component in the early to mid-1970s, well before our national attention was focused on its importance. Again, it takes different specific forms. Challenge Eduation, the key at Lawrence North and initiated by I/D/E/A, stresses self direction and awareness for students with an emphasis on demonstrating excellence at a personal level. Ribault High School promotes the idea that all students should strive for excellence through pep rallies for those taking state assessments and through other parallel activities designed to give academic success the status and visibility in the school which athletic success has so often enjoyed; and West Linn's "Academic Spirit" week takes a similar approach. Chandler High involves professional staff, parents and the community in continuous review of standards, while Colville both assures maximum learning time and emphasizes the importance of academics with a daily schedule which features seven periods, nine "specialty classes" (e.g., Jazz Band at 7:00 a.m.) and no study halls, an arrangement which allows

nearly 20 percent of their students to take 8 or 9 classes daily. There is no school in the entire set which has not adopted one or more specific means of placing a clear priority on academic excellence.

III. Goals and Outcomes Drive Curriculum Planning and Instruction

This theme is not a surprising one, given that these schools were selected for profiling by a Goal Based Education Program. What is notable is the pervasiveness of this theme at all levels and in all activities, the comfort with which it is accommodated in such a diverse set of secondary schools, and the ease in which they match it up with such other emphases as human interaction and caring and flexible use of time.

IV. Time is Used in a Flexible Way

Juxtaposed with the priority for academic excellence, this feature is just as pervasive among these excellent schools. Its most consistent expression takes the form of a continuous progress approach, which is the heart of well over half of the programs. The specifics vary of course, but for the majority of these schools, the curriculum and scheduling procedures have been carefully designed to allow students who demonstrate mastery to move into a new area of learning and instruction. Some, such as Hood River, allow students to move from course to course at any time during the school year; others, such as Mariner, require mastery of each unit with flexible strands of required courses, but nearly all break down the traditional domination of the course/period/time pattern.

V. Unity of Mission and Purpose is Built by Participatory Planning and Decision Making

This may seem to be an obvious attribute of a goal-based approach, but it is well known that simply having clearly stated purposes does not always mean

that everyone is striving to reach them. The secondary schools profiled by the GBE program do not approach this challenge in the same way, but they uniformly give it priority attention and allocate time and resources to developing and maintaining systems which achieve it.

Hood River, for example, stresses a "diffused decision making" system in which each of six academic divisions is divided into several departments. Each division has a coordinator and each department has a team leader. These individuals all serve on the principal's cabinet, along with the building administrators. All are reassigned annually, based on interest. In addition, there is a curriculum committee made up of one representative from each subject area and this committee regularly assigns the study of proposed changes to a subcommittee. The large number of staff involved, and the leadership rotation assures that nearly all faculty can participate in a way which is both significant and structured.

At Lawrence North, there is an organizational system in which teacher "clusters" develop recommended program activities, which are selected by a leadership team, put into practice by an implementing committee and reviewed by a monitoring committee. The leadership and implementation memberships rotate regularly, thus assuring opportunity for broad participation.

Centennial High School has established a data-based approach to long term improvement which involves management by a leadership team (teachers and administrators) which works with the entire staff to determine priority improvement goals, select and implement research-based practices to meet them and monitor progress toward their achievement.

Glendale Union High has a highly sophisticated instructional management system which focuses on data-based annual reviews of student progress in five

"core" areas. The success of the system is heavily reliant on teacher initiated planning and on teacher and student use of highly specific data on skill achievement for setting instructional priorities and developing curriculum. The program is based upon the use of teams of teachers to develop goals and objectives and qualifications for criterion-referenced test items that accurately capture a common core of instruction taking place across four different schools.

Colville High School involves staff in establishing yearly goals through relating self assessment and individual goal setting to annual goals for the school. An annual staff survey of satisfaction with the school, periodic "concern sessions" with small groups around specific issues and monthly brown bags focused on school improvement all help keep everyone on target and alert to the need for in-course modifications.

VI. Planning is a Continuous Process

This was second only to a goal based approach among the profiled schools. The schools and their leadership consistently cited the importance of regular review of curriculum, assessment of outcomes, use of data in reviewing progress and a systematic approach to continuous planning.

Colville, for example, believes strongly in setting annual targets for improvement and surveys of teacher perceptions of school progress; Chalmette tracks emerging research in order to keep the program responsive to student needs; Glendale systematically reviews its planning process each year and adjusts the goals which drive the system on the basis of data; West Linn not only prepares annual improvement plans with each department participating with specific goals of their own, but the school prepares and circulates to all parents, students and teachers an annual report which summarizes progress and

conducts community seminars to get input on needs for new directon; Centennial utilizes its leadership team to manage ongoing schoolwide data collection on needed improvements and to plan research-based implementation of new efforts as they are needed.

Conclusions

This presentation of the broad themes which emerge from the GBE profiles may mask as much as it reveals. Other commonalities, such as a stress on positive discipline, use of educational technology to support continuous progress approaches and an emphasis on local development of system and curriculum support materials also can be seen.

The broad themes, however, sketch an overall picture of this set of successful schools which is striking when they are considered in relationship to both the research on effective schools and examinations of characteristics of successful business organizations such as Peters' and Waterman's In Search of Excellence (Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., New York, 1982). The importance of a shared mission which is common to both these bodies of research comes through quite strongly in these profiles, as does the commitment to excellence. Peters and Waterman say:

> Let us suppose that we were asked for one all purpose bit of advice for management, one truth that we were able to distill from the excellent companies' research. We might be tempted to reply, "Figure out your value system. Decide what your company stands for."

That is also true of the profiles. The fact that these schools do know what they stand for comes through very strongly.

A second parallel between this set of schools and the studies of effectiveness in both education and business is the area which Peters and

Waterman called "productivity through people" and which the educational effectiveness literature deals with as setting high expectations.

Peters and Waterman found that treating people as adults, as partners, with dignity and with respect was a key. They point out that there was no more pervasive theme in the excellent companies than respect for the individual, but also caution that what makes the theme "come alive" is

> ...a plethora of structural devices, systems, styles and values, all reinforcing one another so that these companies are truly unusual in their ability to achieve extraordinary results through ordinary people.

They add immediately that they are not talking about mollycoddling, but

> ...tough minded respect for the individual, the willingness to train, to set reasonable and clear expectations and to grant practical autonomy to step out and contribute directly....

This combination of caring, respect and high expectation, along with the "plethora" of reinforcing devices comes through strongly in the profiles of these successful schools.

A final word about leadership. The six themes in this summary do not address it directly, because very little is said directly about it in the profiles. It is interesting to note that this is parallel to the Peters and Waterman research, which focuses on what good organizations do and do not do on the leader's behavior per se. The preparation of the profiles involved the leaders of the schools extensively. Consistently, their concern seems to have been to convey to others the importance of mission, of productivity through people and of systematic goal based planning. That does not mean that leadership was not a strong theme in these schools, rather it speaks volumes about the kind of leadership that brought others to see them as organizations that should be profiled in behalf of improving schools.